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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 007174

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [FR](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: POSITIVE GOF REACTION TO IRAQI REFERENDUM

REF: A. STATE 190679

[1](#)B. STATE 189909

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: FM Douste-Blazy issued a positive public statement October 17 welcoming the results of the October 15 Iraqi constitutional referendum. While the FM's statement was not overly effusive, he welcomed and commended the conditions under which the referendum took place. MFA contacts report that the GoF views the referendum and the last-minute compromises reached on the draft constitutional text as positive steps which mark the broadening of the scope of political participation long advocated by the GoF. The MFA statement did not include a reference to the GoF-floated idea of an international conference. An embassy translation of the October 17 MFA communique follows in para 2. End summary and comment,

[1](#)2. (U) Begin text: The referendum organized in Iraq on Saturday, October 15, on the draft constitution marks a supplementary step in the political process engaged in conforming to UNSCR 1546. I welcome the satisfactory conditions in which the referendum took place, with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq. I am delighted by the electoral mobilization of the great many Iraqis who participated in this vote. The coming stages should permit the involvement of all political forces in the transition process and should contribute also to bringing together all Iraqis around their new institutions in the framework of a sovereign and united Iraq. End text.

[1](#)3. (C) Responding to reftel points, MFA Iraq desk officer David Cvach told us the GoF statement on the referendum was intended to be positive, while stressing the importance of the coming December 15 elections. Cvach commented that the GoF viewed the referendum and the last-minute compromises reached over the draft constitutional text as important and welcome developments, which offered the potential to make the political process in Iraq "as inclusive as possible," as the GoF has long advocated. Cvach concurred that there was a growing and welcome willingness among Iraqi Sunnis to advance interests to the political process, and somewhat defensively asserted that the GoF was not trying to be the "Sunnis' lawyer." Instead, he reasoned, the GoF concluded that Iraqi Sunnis still needed to be convinced that they had a stake in participating in Iraq's political process, and December elections would be the decisive test. Poloff responded that the GoF should seek to advance inclusivity by encouraging to the maximum degree Sunni participation in December elections and offering tangible support for the electoral process.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Despite the positive GoF response to the referendum, the GoF remains marginalized on the ground in Iraq. Despite repeated MFA assurances to us that he will return to post, French Ambassador to Iraq Bajolet remains in France after departing Baghdad over two months ago due to security threats. Meanwhile, the ongoing domestic investigation into the involvement of two senior French diplomats, including the former French UN permrep, for Oil for Food-related corruption, has put the GoF (and the MFA in particular) on the defensive, in the wake of unusually harsh French media coverage criticizing the MFA and GoF Iraq policy in general. The end result is a GoF more prone to remain on the sidelines, rather than offer new, concrete assistance to help promote Iraq stability. End comment. Please visit Paris' Classified Website at: <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.cfm> STAPLETON